

**GROWING,
PROCESSING,
DISTRIBUTING,
EATING AND HEALTH,
COMPOSTING**

MAYOR RYBAK'S HOMEGROWN MINNEAPOLIS COMES TO THE NORTHSIDE

If anyone doubts that homegrown food or urban agriculture is gaining popularity, just ask the 98 people citywide who applied to serve on the new City-community Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council to begin January 2012. At the City of Minneapolis initiative's meeting to review progress and gather thoughts for next steps, they announced the membership.

And they came to North Minneapolis, home of Northside Fresh, a coalition of 79 organizations relating to healthy eating, to do it. The largest meeting room at UROC was filled with urban agriculture advocates from all over the city.

The crowd heard history; about one of the nation's two surviving Victory Gardens, at 46th Avenue and 39th Street South, and the saga behind the current Minneapolis farmer's market location.

Poster art was commissioned to



show the stages in the food cycle and talk about progress in each one.

Nineteen Homegrown Minneapolis recommendations have shown significant progress in the first two phases of task force activity, city staff said, and 19 others have been started. Included in that first 19 are NorthWay funded Project Sweetie Pie and the garden at We Win Institute. The remaining third have not been started or addressed.

Megan O'Hara, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak's wife, has championed the Homegrown cause through its first phases, beginning in December 2008. Rybak, who said his kids ask if their parents ever talk about anything else but locally grown food, said "there's a lot standing between us and good food. It's a global system," 90 percent of food in Minneapolis is imported, yet we're shipping soybeans across the world with "no value added. We should be growing and canning" more for local consumption.

Council Member Cam Gordon, Ward 2, dedicated his staffer Robin Garwood to the Homegrown effort and was on hand to announce the new food council.

The room broke up into small groups to identify future priorities, and here's some of what was reported back:

- Better communication needed about Homegrown, we're well on our way to claiming this as part of the city's identity
- Invite more to the table, find out

what diverse communities want rather than telling them

- Continue working on the Ag Plan (Urban Agriculture). Market Bucks (\$5 free for using an EBT card) worked well. Be creative with small business growth
- Continue collaborations, on fundraising and marketing. Get the message out that local and organic is not necessarily more expensive.
- EBT at the markets, and food hubs were successful
- 2012 should be the year for composting and communal root cellars
- Add food processing and composting to the farmer's market cycle
- Connect rural to urban. LeSueur canning factories are gone, can they be brought back?
- Work on scale, for example, could 800 West Broadway be a canning factory?



Note: the City of Minneapolis has changed its website, and many links on old literature and in old searches no longer work.

Photography by Pat Carney for Northway Community Trust. Reporting by Margo Ashmore.



City Council Member Cam Gordon kicks off the presentation, then committee experts report on each of five aspects of Homegrown Minneapolis: Growing, processing, distributing, eating and health, and composting. Giving the "eating and health" report, Mustafa Sundiata of NorthPoint Health & Wellness, assigned to Northside Fresh.



Above: Mayor Rybak enthusiastically reviews the five phases of urban agriculture: growing, processing, distributing, eating and health, and composting. The Mayor's wife, Megan O'Hara chairs the advisory committee for Homegrown Minneapolis. Their children complain that gardening is their only topic of conversation. Below: Rybak joins into a discussion group.



Above: Sarah Strickland from Cincinnatus facilitated the question and answer session. Below: Snacks for attendees, fresh vegetables, of course.